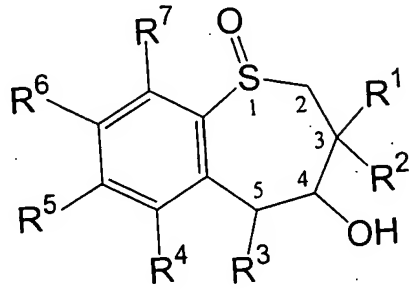
IN THE CLAIMS

1. (Currently Amended) A method of preparing an enantiomerically-enriched tetrahydrobenzothiepine-1-oxide having the formula (I):



(I)

wherein:

R^1 and R^2 are independently selected from the group consisting of H, alkyl, alkenyl, and alkynyl;

R^3 is selected from the group consisting of H, alkyl, alkenyl, alkynyl, aryl, and cycloalkyl;

wherein aryl can be substituted with one or more substituent groups independently selected from the group consisting of alkyl, alkenyl, alkynyl, polyalkyl, and OR^{19};

R^{19} is selected from the group consisting of hydrogen, alkyl, alkenyl, alkynyl, polyalkyl and, alkylarylalkyl;

R^{19} is optionally substituted with quaternary heterocycle;

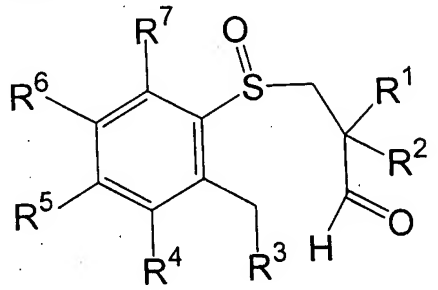
R^4, R^5, R^6, R^7 are independently selected from the group consisting of H, alkyl, alkenyl, alkynyl, halo, and $-NR^9R^{10}$;

R^9 and R^{10} are independently selected from the group consisting of H, and alkyl;

R^3 and the hydroxyl at the 4-position of the enantiomerically-enriched tetrahydrobenzothiepine-1-oxide are in a syn-conformation with respect to each other; and

the sulfur at the 1-position of the seven-member ring and the carbons at the 4-position and the 5-position of the seven member ring are chiral centers;

wherein the method comprises cyclizing an enantiomerically-enriched aryl-3-propanalsulfoxide having the formula (II):



(II)

wherein R^1, R^2, R^3, R^4, R^5, R^6, and R^7 are as described above, and wherein the sulfur is an enantiomerically-enriched chiral center, to form the enantiomerically-enriched tetrahydrobenzothiepine-1-oxide of formula (I).

65. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 1, wherein said cyclizing step is performed in the presence of a base.

66. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 65, wherein said base is potassium t-butoxide.